

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BONN 15877 311532Z
ACTION SS-25

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AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

S E C R E T BONN 15877

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, MOPS, PINS, GW, LE, SY, IS
SUBJECT: LEBANON SITUATION

REFERENCE: STATE 221467

1. THE FOREIGN OFFICE SHARES OUR ASSESSMENT OF THE
SITUATION IN LEBANON AND IS ACTIVELY CONSIDERING OUR
REQUEST TO APPROACH THE SARG.

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2. WE PRESENTED POINTS CONTAINED REFTEL TO DIRECTOR
OF MIDDLE EASTERN AFFAIRS BOECKER ON AUGUST 31. IN
RESPONSE, BOECKER SAID THE FOREIGN OFFICE WAS EQUALLY
CONCERNED ABOUT THE SITUATION AND, IN FACT, REGARDED IT
AS "DANGEROUS." HE SAID THE FRG HAD RECENTLY RECEIVED
SOME INDICATIONS THAT THE SYRIANS HAD DECIDED

FORCEABLY TO DISARM THE MARONITE MILITIA. THIS ASSESSMENT, WHICH BOECKER CAREFULLY NOTED WAS BASED ON INDICATIONS RATHER THAN CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE, STEMMED FROM TALKS BETWEEN THE FRG AMBASSADOR IN DAMASCUS AND ASSAD'S ADVISOR DAOUDI AND BETWEEN FRG DEVELOPMENT MINISTER OFFERGELD AND ASSAD HIMSELF ON AUGUST 25. THE FRG EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON HAD ALREADY BEEN INSTRUCTED TO GIVE THE DEPARTMENT THE DETAILS OF THESE CONVERSATIONS AND WOULD PROBABLY DO SO TODAY.

3. BOECKER SAID SARKIS HAD THUS FAR RESISTED SYRIAN REQUESTS THAT HE SUPPORT A DISARMING OF THE MARONITES; THE FRG BELIEVED HE WOULD CONTINUE TO DO SO. DESPITE THIS, IT APPEARED THE SYRIANS WERE PREPARED TO PROCEED UNILATERALLY. THEY WOULD PROBABLY CONTINUE TO NIBBLE AWAY AT CHRISTIAN AREAS UNTIL IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE ISRAELIS WOULD PERMIT THEM TO GO NO FURTHER.

4. DURING A MEETING WITH THE SYRIAN AMBASSADOR ON AUGUST 30 TO DISCUSS PREPARATIONS FOR THE SEPTEMBER 11-15 ASSAD VISIT, STATE SECRETARY VAN WELL HAD EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT THE SITUATION IN LEBANON WITHOUT MAKING SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO DEVELOPMENTS IN THE NORTHERN PART OF THE COUNTRY. VAN WELL HAD, HOWEVER, SUGGESTED THAT DAMASCUS BE CAREFUL ABOUT PRESSURE ON THE MARONITES WHICH COULD PROVOKE ISRAELI
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INVOLVEMENT. BOECKER WAS PERSONALLY CONVINCED THAT A CONTINUATION OF SYRIAN MILITARY OPERATIONS WOULD PROVOKE ISRAELI AIR STRIKES. HE THOUGHT IT UNLIKELY THAT THE ISRAELIS AGAIN WOULD MOVE LARGE-SCALE GROUND FORCES INTO LEBANON.

5. BOECKER UNDERTOOK TO DISCUSS OUR APPROACH WITH VAN WELL, RECOMMENDING THAT THE FOREIGN OFFICE GO ALONG WITH OUR REQUEST TO APPROACH THE SARG IN AN EFFORT TO BRING ABOUT A CEASE FIRE. HE PROMISED TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH US REGARDING THE FOREIGN OFFICE'S DECISION.

6. FOLLOWING OUR CONVERSATION WITH BOECKER, THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR MET WITH FOREIGN OFFICE PLANNING STAFF DIRECTOR KINKEL (GENSCHER'S CLOSEST CONFIDANT) AND MADE THE SAME POINTS CONTAINED REFTEL. KINKEL SAID THAT HE WAS ABSOLUTELY CONFIDENT THAT GENSCHER WOULD FULLY SUPPORT US AND THAT THE FRG WOULD SPEAK TO THE SYRIANS. HE SAID THE GERMANS SEE THE SITUATION IN THE SAME WAY THAT WE DID AND ARE VERY CONCERNED NOT TO LET ANYTHING DISTURB THE VITAL CAMP DAVID SUMMIT.

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